

JOINT PASTORAL STUDIES SEMINAR

The first of what is hoped will be a series of Joint Pastoral Studies Seminars was held at the Kansai Academy House, Feb. 22-28, under the auspices of a special committee set up to organize such seminars. These are made possible by a gift from the German churches, with an initial grant of ¥2 million, to be followed with a capital grant of ¥3 million over the next two years, the interest on which will be used to provide part of the seminar expenses. It is planned to hold two a year.

The theme of the first seminar was THE MEANING OF PASTORAL MINISTRY IN TODAY'S WORLD. One of the highlights of the program was an address by Prof. Jurgen Moltmann of Tübingen, author of the well-known work, THE THEOLOGY OF HOPE. He spoke on the theme JESUS AND THE CHURCH.

The other highlight was attendance of the entire group at the twelfth session of the trial of Rev. Shunichi Tanetani, being held currently at the Kobe court house. He is charged with the responsibility of harboring two teen-aged boys who were implicated in the activities of a group of high school students in concealing Molotov cocktails in their school. The boys had been permitted to stay in the church of Rev. Shogo Suzuki, in Osaka, for ten days, and in this session of the trial Mrs. Tanetani and Mrs. Suzuki were on the witness stand.

On the morning of the trial, Messrs. Tanetani and Suzuki and Mr. Ken-kichi Nakadaira, one of the defense lawyers and a former judge, well known as an outstanding churchman, explained to the seminar group the background of the trial and the issues at stake, which involve a pastor's right to render pastoral care.

The other sessions of the seminar were occupied chiefly with group discussions of pastoral ministry. Rather than trying to examine specifically local problems of pastoral ministry, the group tried to see what were the ramifications of an all-embracing ministry that reaches out to include the whole of society within the responsibility of the church, and to see pastoral ministry as a group ministry, shared by pastor and congregation. Attendance was also drawn to the need of a mutual ministry of pastors to one another.

One pastor, in his evaluation, expressed himself thus: "The Kyodan will no doubt change greatly during the next ten years. The present confused situation of the church is a birth pang of a new creation, which we labor to bring forth through this kind of engagement. The real change will come, not from the big cities, with all their theorizing, but from the silent but active town and country districts, the places where the real action is taking place."

On Sunday evening members reported on their attendance that morning at services in various Kyoto churches.

The pastors felt the total period had been one of hopeful sharing and encouragement. The themes and structure of future seminars will be decided by the Committee on Joint Pastoral Studies.

A G A P E I N N (Part II) - Y. Moribe

Members of Nishi-Shinjuku Church have been conducting Agape Inn Sunday evening for young people of Shinjuku, an entertainment section of Tokyo. One of those who attended, Arbo, had returned home to Hokkaido on probation after being arrested on charges of assault.

WHEN ARBO'S FATHER wrote that his son was back in the futen pattern, we were very disappointed. But that was the situation -- and we prayed for Arbo.

Strangely enough, a week later, right after the morning service, a long distance call came from Arbo. He said he had tried to change his way of living but hadn't been reading the Bible or praying and couldn't make it alone. He asked for our help.

Each person there talked to him in turn, even though it was long distance and expensive. Arbo said he realized city life was not good for him -- he was going to try to find outdoor work in the country.

When he passed through Tokyo on his way to Kyushu, where he was going to work, he stopped at Nishi-Shinjuku Church to ask for an introduction to a church there. Now he's back in Hokkaido but stops at the church whenever he come through Tokyo.

THERE'S a sequel to this. One Sunday night last summer only two workers -- myself and one other -- came instead of the usual six or seven. And that night some fifteen new young people came. I wondered what we'd do with only two of us there.

We began with self-introductions. A man named Akio told this story:

More than a year ago one of the young girls in your group talked to me. She told me, "Christ can change your life." I didn't believe it but she insisted it was so. I came to Agape Inn and listened to the talk but three days later had forgotten everything I'd heard.

I was a member of the yojimbo -- those who beat up on anyone who wanted to pull out of the gang I was in. One day I met a missionary by the name of Fleenor.

When I found that the Kirisutokyo he was talking about was the same I'd heard about at your church, I made it a point to go to the coffee shop mission he was at.

After that it seemed whenever I was hanging around Shinjuku trying to recruit young people, I kept running into Fleenor. Once he said, "If you ever decide to quit the gang, you can come to my place." And one day I went. I stayed for three months. During that time I was baptized.

I made up mind to get out of the gang. But it wasn't that easy. You have to go through many steps. There's a good chance that you may end up being beaten to death.

Once I would have hit back when I was hit. This time I took the beating without striking back. Actually I thought of Christ and I didn't feel the pain. Later I showed up at Fleenor's, my face smashed and bloody.

All things considered it was hard for me to continue to live in Shinjuku. When Fleenor went to Karuizawa for evangelistic work I went with him.

There I found out what it means not only to be a Christian but to tell others about Christ.

I've just returned to Tokyo and I've come here to say "thank you."

When Akio finished talking everyone went into the evening church service.

THAT NIGHT AS WE TALKED, I mentioned Arbo and how, when he ran into the man who'd had him arrested -- whom he had hated so -- something had led him to say, "I'm sorry." Akio replied quickly "I was that man...."

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When we had talked about starting Agape Inn some people at church were against it.

"You're undertaking a pretty big thing, aren't you?" said the pastor. The young people may be enthusiastic now but after a while they'll tire of it. Wouldn't it be better to have it just once a month?"

"It would be easiest just to take a nap," I replied. Then I explained my feelings -- if we hold it once a month at the convenience of the workers, we're putting human

considerations first. If we believe God is always at work in people's lives, we will have it every week.

There is no real opposition now although there is not much participation from those attending morning worship, except for the young people. One man in his 60s, the head of a shipbuilding company, has come every week. He is Agape Inn's "caretaker." His coming really encouraged us because we want this to be the witness of the whole church.

How many people come is not the important thing. Sometimes it is six or eight, sometimes none. What is important is that we present Christ.

At Agape Inn we're not "Christians" and "non-Christians." We're all the same, and Christ is in our midst. Salvation -- that's the work of God.

ONE OF THE THINGS we're thinking about is medical advice. I may say that sniffing glue or taking drugs is "wrong" but I'm an amateur with no actual experience or know-

ledge. We hope to find a Christian doctor who will work with us.

Another problem is employment. Most of the futen people hate work. They get money by begging or by cheating people.

One young man worked as a sandwich man but spent everything he got. He had many dreams but none ever came true. Now he's begun to save his money. He has rented a room and is living on his own for the first time. And he hopes by next year to have enough to go to college.

We don't give money to people. People in Shinjuku don't need money. None of them is starving. If we give them bread, after they've eaten the bread, they'll be just where they were before.

WHAT IS REALLY ENCOURAGING is to have someone like Akio become involved in this kind of work. It's impossible for people like myself to understand how futen think and feel. But Akio -- he knows.....

On a side wall of the sanctuary of the Shinjuku Nishi Church hangs the picture of a young man -- Paul Thede by name. The son of Japan missionaries, Paul was in seminary in the United States, preparing to come to Japan as a missionary with his wife when he was killed in a bus accident in 1951, while on a seminary choir trip.

In Paul's memory, women's groups of the Evangelical United Brethren Church in the State of Minnesota gave ¥50,000,000 for evangelistic work in Japan. The money was used toward the purchase of land and construction of the building for the Shinjuku Nishi congregation, founded in 1954.

The membership of the church is now 89, with an average attendance of thirty-two at Sunday morning worship service. Today the congregation includes both members who were a part of the original nucleus, young and middle aged couples who have come into the church in the intervening years, and the young people who have initiated Agape Inn. Pastor of the church since its beginning has been the Rev. Minoru Okada.

THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN

A 42-page printed booklet of the English translation of the Constitution and Bylaws enacted in October 1946 with succeeding revisions and modifications. Price: ¥300 plus ¥55 for postage in Japan; \$1.50 including postage overseas.

Kyodan Research Institute on Mission, Japan Christian Center #31,
551 Totsukamachi 1-chome, Shinjuku ku, Tokyo 160, Japan.

what has been -- IN THE KYODAN -- what is to be

I. Coming Events

Kyodan church kindergarten heads meet in May on "crisis in church kindergartens" and religious vs educational juridical person status (Shimpo 3/10)

NCC Triennial Assembly meets March 27-28

Kyodan-related Missionaries hold conference March 27-29

English telephone counselling service (TELL) begins April 1

II. Recent Events

Districts

Kanagawa district holds assembly; votes to give financial support to Japanese pastor invited to serve in Korea; decides not to conduct ordination for pastors examined in special procedures (Shimpo 3/3)

Higashi-Chugoku district pastors discuss "the ministry"; Akaiwa's "the Exodus of God" is presented and debated; meaning of ordination raises lively discussion (Shimpo 3/17)

Education

School and church students and teachers give ¥3.8 million to purchase X-ray equipment for Nepal during Christian Education Week 10/21-28 (Shimbun 3/3) see "coming events"

Evangelism

390 churches contribute ¥817,140 on church anniversaries between July and Dec. toward building other churches (Shimpo 3/3)

9th NCC Urban Industrial Evangelism National Conference meets 2/2-5 on "the working place, the church and theology:" (Shimbun 3/3)

Faith and Order

Special committee confirms need for new edition of book of rituals using colloquial language (Shimpo 3/24)

Comm. reaffirms former ruling on right of Moderator to cast deciding vote when executive committee vote is split (Shimpo 2/24)

Ministry

26th Exec. Comm. meets 2/13-14, takes measures to accept those who passing special licentiate examination in 1971 (Shimpo 2/24)

First Joint Pastors Study Seminar meets in Kyoto through cooperation of Japanese and German churches (Shimpo 3/17; News Letter 3/73)

Overseas

Jurgen Moltmann, German theologian, visits Japan (Shimbun 3/10)

Munakata asks for aid for building of church in Sao Paulo (Shimpo 3/3)

Rev. Jonathan M. Fujita of Los Angeles visits Japan 2/20-3/9

Publishing

Kyodan Board of Publication publishes Mienai Hitobito Zainichi Chosenjin (The Invisible Koreans in Japan) by Jiro Iinuma (Shimpo 23/24)

Social

Christians and other citizens' groups challenge shrine-government connections in Shimane and Shizuoka prefectures (Shimbun 3/10)

Social Comm. issues new Yasukuni pamphlets (Shimbun 3/10)

Social and Evangelism comms. name new Hatarakuhito editorial comm., broadens content so as to serve as bridge between church and society (Shimpo 3/10)

Inochi no Denwa conducts 5th training course for volunteers (Shimpo 3/10)